

VZCZCXRO0774
PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHPF #0912/01 1310710
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 110710Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6652
INFO RUEHZS/ASEAN COLLECTIVE
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1439

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 PHNOM PENH 000912

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

FOR G/TIP, EAP/MLS and EAP/RSP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KWMN](#) [CB](#)
SUBJECT: CAMBODIA: QUARTERLY REPORT ON HUMAN
TRAFFICKING FOR JANUARY-MARCH, 2006

¶1. (U) Summary: In the first quarter, there were ten police operations and verdicts rendered in five court cases. Fifteen women and girls were either identified as victims of trafficking or removed from brothels; and eight human traffickers arrested. Among the five court cases, 11 human traffickers and pimps were convicted with penalties ranging from five to 17 years. Due in part to the changes in the police structure, not many police operations took place in January and February. However, on the plus side, improved court performance in trafficking cases was noted. End Summary.

Police Action

¶2. (U) On January 6, a woman was arrested and sent to the Anti-TIP Department by the father of a four-year-old child who had been missing for one year. A year ago in Sihanoukville, a woman approached the father, befriended him and offered to look after his child, after which the child went missing along with the woman. In January 2006, an acquaintance of the father spotted the woman begging in a Phnom Penh pagoda, and reported the news to the father. Upon receiving the news, the father came to the reported place, had the woman arrested and sent to the Anti-TIP Department. The woman confessed to stealing the child and selling her to an unknown person. The child's whereabouts are still unknown. The woman is under pretrial detention.

¶3. (U) On January 18, the police of the Phnom Penh Anti-TIP Unit arrested two men in Phnom Penh while they were making plans to take two women across the border to work in the Malaysian sex industry. After the arrest, the two women, aged 20 and 21, returned to their families. The two suspects were charged with human trafficking and sent to Prey Sar prison for pretrial detention. Police claimed that this arrest came after six months of police investigation. However, the conversation with Mr. Keo Thea, Deputy Chief of the Phnom Penh Anti-Trafficking Unit, suggests that the women were aware that they were going to Malaysia for sex work and willing to do so.

¶4. (U) On January 20, the Phnom Penh Anti-TIP unit arrested a Cambodian man who had a sexual relationship with a 14-year-old girl over an extended period of time. Around six months ago, after receiving a complaint from the girl's mother, police submitted a complaint to the Phnom Penh municipal court accusing the man of debauchery and sexual exploitation of a

minor. After months of investigation, the Phnom Penh court issued an arrest warrant, upon which the police made the arrest. The man was charged with debauchery and is in pretrial detention.

15. (U) On January 14, a 20-year-old women escaped from a Thailand-based brothel along the Koh Kong border with the help of a Cambodian client. The victim is from Pursat province; she went to Thailand in 2005 with two perpetrators to look for jobs. She was placed in a brothel in Thailand, and forced to have sex with customers for seven months. The perpetrator remains at large; the victim was referred to the Department of Women's Affairs. The Anti-Trafficking police in Koh Kong are pursuing the case.

16. (U) Also in late January, a victim of labor trafficking was returned to Cambodia after her family borrowed money from relatives to pay back the debt. She went to Thailand in mid-January with a broker and placed in debt bondage. She could not return unless she or her family paid off her debt.

17. (SBU) On February 24, the Department raided a brothel in Kampong Cham, removing three voluntary sex workers and arresting a male pimp. This raid is based on AFESIP's complaint; however, discrepancies exist between AFESIP's report and the police investigation. In the complaint, AFESIP stated that 18 women and girls (some of whom reportedly were underage) were housed in the brothel. The police investigation found only four individuals, all adults. Police alleged that the small size of the facility would not allow it to be a large-scale brothel.

PHNOM PENH 00000912 002 OF 003

18. (U) On March 15, The Anti-Trafficking Department cooperated with the police of Takeo police commissariat to arrest a man for trafficking two victims for sexual exploitation. The man was charged with human trafficking and is now in pretrial detention. The victims were returned to the family. The women were deceived into going to Phnom Penh by the suspect, who is running a karaoke parlor in Phnom Penh. Three days after arriving in Phnom Penh, the man forced them to provide sexual services to customers. They then tried to find way to get out of the place and call the hotline number for rescue. Police reported that the court has issued a search warrant for the parlor, which has been shut down.

19. (U) Also on March 15, the Anti-TIP police cooperated with the Banteay Meanchy TIP unit to rescue a 20-year-old Vietnamese trafficking victim. The raid was conducted after police received a complaint from the victim's mother. The brothel was once raided in 2004, resulting in the removal of 11 sex workers, one of whom was a minor, and the arrest of the pimps. The pimp was charged and detained at the time. But later, she was reportedly let out of jail for health reasons. Her trial related to the previous case is expected to take place soon. In the current case, police did not arrest the pimp this time, anticipating that she will to go to trial under the old charges. The victims were referred to the Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC).

110. (U) Also on March 15, the Phnom Penh Anti-TIP unit conducted an operation on a Street 63 brothel, resulting in the rescue of four victims and arrest of two perpetrators. The perpetrators are under pretrial detention. The four victims were referred to an NGO for care. The raid was based on intelligence collected by the International Justice Mission (IJM).

111. (U) Police rescued a victim of trafficking of a

Pailin brothel on March 16, after another victim escaped and went to the police. Police of Anti-TIP department then went to the province and cooperated with the Anti-TIP Unit in Pailin to remove the victim. Mr. Thong Kim Heng, Chief of the Anti-TIP Unit of the Department, told Emboff that for this case, the Pailin Police commissariat contacted the pimp to secure the release of the victim, but no one was arrested nor has the brothel been closed.

Court Cases

¶12. (SBU) On January 24, the Phnom Penh Municipal Court sentenced a woman to seven years for attempting to sell two Cambodian virgins. Chum Srey Pov was arrested on October 8, 2004, while attempting to sell two women, ages 20 and 23, for USD 1,000 to a foreigner. After the arrest, the two women were returned to their families. During the hearing, one of the victims testified that Srey Pov had not tried to sell her. IJM, however, maintained that IJM's investigation found Srey Pov to be an established trafficker.

¶13. (U) On January 25, the Phnom Penh Municipal Court conducted the trial of two suspected traffickers who were arrested in July 2004 while attempting to sell two underage girls to a foreigner for sexual services. Two victims, aged 16 and 17, who are under AFESIP's care, testified at the trial. Both victims acknowledged that the accused had been their pimps in Svay Rieng, and brought them to Phnom Penh to sell their virginity. The trial judge read out the verdict on February 1, ordering the case transferred to the jurisdiction of Svay Rieng Court. IJM had been concerned that the judge would use this tactic. The IJM source mentioned the arrested pimp allegedly has connections with government officials, who may have helped have the case transferred to a provincial court where it could more easily be dismissed.

¶14. (U) On February 15, the Phnom Penh Court conducted a trial of a pimping case, sentencing the female pimp to 5 years imprisonment. The pimp was arrested in September 2005, at which time two sex workers were removed from the brothel. AFESIP's

PHNOM PENH 00000912 003 OF 003

International Director, Aarti Kapoor, could not provide further details as to what led to the raid in the first place, and if the two women are victims of trafficking. (Note: Citing AFESIP's victim-centered approach, Aarti explained that victims of trafficking or not, the women/girls would need the same services. Therefore, AFESIP does not make a distinction between victims of trafficking and victims of sexual exploitation, which include voluntary prostitutes. End Note.)

¶15. (U) On February 20, the Phnom Penh Municipal Court conducted the hearing of a trafficking case, involving five perpetrators (the two women who initially approached the victim and her mother, the two men who helped them cross the border into Thailand, and the owner who forced the victim to serve as a prostitute to clients in Thailand) and one 15-year-old victim. The traffickers were convicted and sentenced to 10 years each in prison, and ordered to pay compensation of USD 1,500 to the victim. The victim went to Thailand in June last year, believing she would get a well-paying job in Koh Kong, but instead was forced to work in a brothel.

¶16. (SBU) On February 27, the Banteay Meanchey Provincial court tried a trafficking case involving a

female trafficker and three victims, one of whom was 15 years old. The verdict is pending, as the traffickers requested that the court provide a defense attorney. The three victims are sisters, having gone to Malaysia in March 2005 to work in a karaoke parlor. They were later forced to provide sexual services to pay the debt incurred in trafficking them to Malaysia. In April 2005, they managed to make their way out with the arrangement of CWCC in Cambodia and NGOs in Malaysia. Ung Chanthol, Director of CWCC, told Emboff that in April 2005, two suspects, a Singaporean husband and Cambodian wife, were arrested and sent to provincial court and the Department of Foreigners in Phnom Penh, respectively. However, the husband was later released under circumstances that are not clear.

¶17. (U) On March 23, the Phnom Penh Municipal Court heard a trafficking case involving two perpetrators, a trafficker who tricked a victim sold her into prostitution and the Stung Treng-based brothel owner. The traffickers received 12-year prison sentence; and the pimp, found guilty on two counts of trafficking and pimping, received 17 years. IJM commented that sentencing the pimp on both trafficking and pimping counts, and ordering the sentence to be served consecutively is an unprecedented practice. In the past, the judge would press only for the most serious count. Moreover, the judge's informing the victim of her right to decide if she wants the public to be included in the trial given the sensitive nature of this case is also noteworthy.

STORELLA